

# **Widener University Student Government Association Elections Code 2023-2024**

## **THE ELECTIONS CODE**

### PREAMBLE

The Elections Code shall specify regulations and procedures for student elections and shall contain the rules about the Student Government Association elections. The Elections Committee and the Student Government Association Advisors are the primary source of judicial review for code of elections at Widener University. Any other materials distributed by the Elections Committee and Student Government Association Advisors are intended to facilitate the legal and fair execution of the elections, but they are not to be thought of as substitutes for this code. In instances where materials distributed by the committee seem to conflict with the Constitution and Bylaws shall prevail.

### SECTION I. GENERAL RULES

A. Any person who is eligible and applies to become a candidate for office must complete and submit an official candidate application to the Student Government Association (SGA) email before the deadline specified in the Elections Schedule that is provided by the Elections Committee.

B. Candidates are expected to check their email and teams chat with all candidates frequently during the campaign and voting period. Candidates will be held responsible for holding communication through email and teams chat regarding anything concerning elections 24 hours the message was sent.

C. All candidates for a position on the Executive Board must attend an election meeting set forth by the Elections Committee and an in-person interview. Failure to attend will cause you to be disqualified in elections and voting week.

D. E-mail and Teams shall be the official mode of communication of the Elections Committee.

E. All candidates must include their preferred names on the ballot for the election, as these will be the names that are revealed to the student body and on the ballot.

F. All candidates and campaigns will be subject to Widener student conduct policies. Violation of any of these policies by a candidate or their campaign worker may, at the discretion of the Elections Committee, result in disqualification.

H. During the campaign period at least one candidate question-directed forum shall be held on campus.

I. Unless otherwise specified, the standard for the making of any decision by the Elections Committee shall be a majority vote of the seated membership of the committee and then reported to the advisors via the current President.

J. Failure to abide by the rules and the regulation within this document is not excused by ignorance.

## SECTION II. APPOINTMENT OF THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT MEMBERS

1. Executive Board positions shall be elected by the whole of the student body.

a. All Executive Board positions, excluding the President and Vice- President, shall be appointed by the Student Government.

## SECTION III. ELIGIBILITY

### A. Student Senate

1. To be eligible for candidacy a student must:

a. Remain a student at Widener University throughout their term of office.

b. Have a cumulative grade point average no lower than 2.5, as is stated in the Student Government Association Constitution and bylaws.

c. Be in good standing as defined by the Office of the Dean of Students Conduct.

d. Be a full-time student, as defined by the Registrar.

### B. Executive Team

1. To be eligible to run for office, or to hold an office, a student must:

a. Have a cumulative grade point average no lower than 2.75 for all executive board positions.

b. Be in good standing and not on probation by the Office of the Dean of Students.

C. No person may run for more than one position concurrently and may not hold another executive board position as Vice President or President in another club for the positions of President and Vice President of Senate. This can be reviewed at the discretion of the executive team and the advisors.

## SECTION IV. VOTING

### A. Student Senate

1. Senators shall be elected by the student body.
2. The candidates for Senator positions with the most votes by the student body in the election will be elected to office.

### B. Executive Board

1. All members of the executive board shall be elected during the Spring Semester and begin their role in office before the end of the Spring Semester.
3. The executive team candidates will be elected by receiving a simple majority of the votes that were cast by the student body.

### C. Ballot

1. All candidates will be listed on the ballot in order of office by the candidate's name on their applications. Write-in candidates will be allowed for the senator's position.

### D. Election results

4. The results of elections will be revealed to the student body and on the SGA website within three (3) business days once voting week has been completed.
5. If any election results are placed under review, that fact will be communicated publicly to the student body immediately after voting week.
6. Special elections by the Student Senate will be held through the rules of the constitution and bylaws of the Widener Student Government Association.
7. Special elections are the responsibility of the President, and it cannot be postponed.
8. If there are no remaining regularly scheduled meetings in the semester, a special meeting will be held.
9. Special elections shall be held in the following case: a tie vote occurs which prevents the occupation of any representative position(s).
10. In special elections, candidates shall be elected by a simple majority vote of the current Senate and current executive board.
11. All appeals or accusations of violations must be made directly to the Elections Committee.
12. Voting shall be conducted by named ballot; votes, however, shall not be made public.

## SECTION V. CAMPAIGNING

### A. Campaigning is defined as:

13. The public distribution or posting of any form of information to the student body seeking votes for a candidate or candidates for different positions.

14. Advertising a candidate at any event or activity not organized by the Elections Committee.

15. Using electronics and messaging students to seek votes for a candidate or candidates for different positions outside the approved advertisement.

B. Campaigning does not include any form of encouragement to voting, by not specifying certain candidates or even a group of candidates.

C. The candidate is responsible for educating all campaign workers and affiliates as to the rules set forth by this Elections Code. Candidates will be held responsible for the actions of those designated by the candidate to assist with the campaign.

The candidate running for any position is held accountable for anyone helping them with their campaign to follow the election code rules. Any violation of this will cause the candidate to run for any position to be responsible and put them at risk of possible disqualification.

D. You may use the Student Government Association logo on your approved advertisement.

E. No campaign materials may display any logo of Widener University.

F. All materials of any form in a campaign must specify the person or campaign of origination.

G. Living areas:

16. No campaign material shall be distributed in the University Center unless it is on the TVS and the bulletin boards, but it still needs to be approved by the Elections Committee. All campaign materials must be approved by OSE and the elections committee.

17. Campaigning materials (maximum 4 per building) distributed within the Residence Halls must only be placed in them and approved by the Office of Residence Life and the Elections Committee. These materials must be given to residence life to be placed in the Resident Assistant mailboxes.

18. No campaigning material should be found on the floor of any space on campus.

19. Going door-to-door to campaign for the elections is prohibited. If this does occur, you will meet with the Elections Committee and could be at risk of disqualification.

H. There will be a Student Government Association Official Voting Station with a computer designated and maintained by the Elections Committee for voting on the first day of voting week.

I. No campaigning is allowed in the University Center during the voting period.

#### SECTION VI. SIGNS AND MATERIALS

A. The definition of a sign includes posters, banners, flyers, and other printed materials for campaigning.

B. Signs may be displayed in the following locations:

20. Bulletin boards in the University Center that are approved by the Elections Committee.

21. Bulletin boards in academic buildings approved by the Elections Committee.

22. Residence Hall walls with the approval of Office of Residence Life and the Elections Committee with a limit of four (4) per hall. It should not be on anyone's doors or put under the doors.

C. Signs are forbidden in the following locations:

23. Anywhere outdoors.

24. On any glass windows, on any elevators, on the sides of public buildings or statues on campus, on any cars on and off campus, on trash anywhere on and off campus, all campaign signs must exceed 8.5 x 11 inches in size, tearing down any other candidates' posters is prohibited, the placing of any sign on top of any other campaign poster is prohibited, and candidates will be responsible for taking down campaign materials within three days of the end of the voting period.

#### SECTION VII. MASS COMMUNICATION

A. Electronic forum campaigning, such as the use of bulletin boards and social media sites, is allowed.

B. No campaign materials should be used by email as a form of campaigning to any students, staff, advisors, or administrators.

C. You may use social media; however, it must be approved by the Elections Committee.

D. Please do not take anyone's phone.

#### SECTION VIII. CAMPAIGN FINANCING

- A. All candidates may spend no more than \$75 during the general election.
- B. Spending money is prohibited during the campaigning for special elections conducted by the Elections Committee.
- C. Exceeding the spending limits submitted by the Elections Committee will result in violation. Submitting incorrect information in the campaign finance report can result in disqualification from the elections.
- D. None of these expenses spent during elections shall be reimbursed by SGA.
- E. Candidates are required to keep a written record of all campaign expenses, including original receipts. Expenditures must be recorded at the price available from where they were obtained.
- F. All shipping charges and any additional charges that may appear should be included in the finance reports.
- K. Expenditures by outside parties

28. All such expenditures shall count toward the candidate's spending limit.

25. Failure to report any expenditures can result in violation of the Elections Code.

- L. Candidates must submit the campaign expenditure report even if they spent no money. The expense report should be turned into the Office of Student Engagement for the Advisors and Elections Committee to review. Failure to do so may result in violation.

#### SECTION IX. PENALTIES AND VIOLATIONS

- A. Upon the reviewing of judgment in any matter concerning violations, the Elections Committee shall explicitly state the level of violation found, the section of the elections code under which the candidate was found guilty, how the committee will hold the candidate, and the timeline for the completion of fixing the issues.
- B. Any person, including non-candidates, that are found guilty of tampering with the election process or results will be automatically disqualified. They may also be deemed ineligible to hold office in the Student Government Association (SGA) and will not be eligible to receive SGA regalia when they graduate. The definition of tampering is listed below:

26. Framing a candidate to gain that person's disqualification.
27. Falsifying of vote results. (don't touch people's phones)
28. Falsely accusing specific candidates of violations.
29. Forging false material and claiming it to be the other candidates.
30. Forging information in a campaign finance report.
31. Falsely spreading rumors about other candidates.
32. Entering residence halls and disturbing the residents.

C. Major violations for which the candidate may be disqualified at the discretion of the Elections Committee include but are not limited to:

33. Posting any slanderous or discriminative material, as determined by the Elections Committee Widener Student Government Association.
34. Exceeding the spending limits that were put in place by the Elections Committee.
35. Failure to correct a violation as directed by the Elections.
36. Any form of interference such as tearing down posters, as determined by the Elections Committee of the Widener Student Government Association.
37. Failure to turn in a correct and complete campaign finance report along with advertising materials in the time specified by the Elections Committee at Widener Student Government Association.
38. Campaigning at the Widener University voting booth or in the University Center Cafeteria during the designated time for Student Government Association Official Voting Station.
39. Posting materials of any form not approved by the Election Committee and Office of Student Engagement at Widener University.
40. False accusations of any foul play interfering with other students' campaigning.
41. Reporting to anyone concerning an issue or concern outside of the Elections Committee or the advisors of the Student Government Association.
42. Other activities prohibited in this code.
43. Three (3) minor violations.

D. Minor violations for which the candidate may be subjected to penalties as decided by the Elections Committee include but are not limited to:

44. Disregarding any of the mass communications listed in section VII.
45. Sign violations.

46. Other violations of rules specified in this code.

E. Any student attending Widener University Main Campus may report an election violation charge against any candidate by submitting the charge by an email to Student Government Association inbox or telling a member of the Elections Committee and the Advisors of the organization. These allegations will be handled according to the procedures given in section X.

47. The members of the Elections Committee shall review all election violation allegations and refer them to the advisors of the Student Government Association to proceed with disciplinary proceedings as outlined in section X. as deemed necessary.

#### SECTION X. ELECTION VIOLATION PROCEEDINGS

A. The body which shall investigate election violation allegations shall be the Elections Committee and the Advisors of the Student Government Association.

48. The Elections Committee and Advisors shall consist of all the members who will not be returning to the Student Government Association for the next academic year.

B. The Elections Committee and Advisors may, at its discretion, direct a campaign to take corrective action to correct any form of a violation, with the purpose of excusing any form of violations.

C. Disciplinary proceedings are given to students who have received a formal written charge due to a violation of the election codes.

E. Election violation proceedings are informal investigations conducted by Student Government Association Elections Committee and Advisors to possible disciplinary action. If the Student Government Association Elections Committee and the Advisors confers with the student during proceedings, no statement made by the student during such conference shall be used against the student in any disciplinary proceedings which may thereafter be instituted.

F. Institution of disciplinary proceedings:

49. Disciplinary proceedings shall be instituted by the Student Government Association by issuing charges notice.



50. The notice of charges and any written notices will be delivered to the student's Widener email within 24 hours before the hearing. The notice will inform the student of the rule or regulation that they have allegedly violated and request the student to appear before the Election Committee for a hearing on the incident that occurred. A copy of these regulations shall accompany each notice of charges sent to the students.

G. If the notice of charges requests the student to appear before the Election Committee, and the student fails to respond and schedule a time to meet the following day, the Student Government Association may dismiss the charges or impose a disciplinary penalty against the student. If the Elections Committee imposes a disciplinary penalty, they will notify the student, in writing, of such action, and the student may appeal by responding to the email. In specific cases, to avoid injustice, the Elections Committee may give the student more time to respond to the charges.

H. If the student appears in response to the written notice of charges, the student should give the Elections Committee a full explanation of the events. The student will be told that any statement made by them may be used against them. If the student chooses to remain silent, then the silence the Elections committee cannot use the charge against them, and that the student may advise the Elections Committee of any witnesses or any evidence to show the innocence of the student.

I. After the hearing with the student and such further investigation as the Election Committee deems necessary, the Elections Committee shall proceed as follows:

51. If the Election Committee determines that the allegation of any violation is false, the charges will be dismissed, and the student notified of the results.

52. If the Election Committee determines that the allegation of any violation is true, then a disciplinary penalty will be imposed, and the Elections Committee will notify the student of the results and future steps.

J. Each hearing shall be conducted before the Elections Committee. The student shall be given the opportunity to hear the evidence against them, explain the statements made by the witnesses, present the witnesses, all evidence, or any information on their behalf. The Election Committee will decide if the information is true or false concerning the actions of the candidate and shall be based on the information that is introduced at the hearing and anything else that is gathered during the investigation that is conducted.

53. The person bringing the charge may present their case before the Election Committee. Anyone charged with the violation has a right to be present during the presentation of the case.

K. Within two business days after the investigation, the Elections Committee shall notify the student, in writing, of what action it will take. The decision letter shall contain a finding of the results for the accused violation by the student and a brief statement of the reasons for the decision that was made and the next steps if disciplinary action is being conducted.

L. The student may appeal against the decision of the Elections Committee through email. It should be filed three (3) days after the investigation and hearing.

54. The appeal will be reviewed by the Elections Committee and SGA advisors.

M. Severe Elections Code violations cases may be referred to the SGA Advisors and the Elections Committee for action on all members.

N. Successfully prosecuted election violations will be made available to all members of the Widener Community through the official Student Government Association email after all the appeals that might be processed are completed.

#### SECTION XI. ELECTIONS SCHEDULE

A. The elections for all new executive board members and senators of Student Government Association shall occur simultaneously.

B. The elections schedule shall be approved by the SGA President to all participating members.

#### SECTION XIII. THE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

A. Members of the Elections shall consist of members of SGA that are not returning to SGA or are graduating.

B. An Elections Committee members who has an inappropriate interest in or any relations to a certain campaign will be removed by the current SGA President from all hearing regarding that part of the campaign unless the member voluntarily removes themselves.

C. If a position on the committee becomes vacant for any reason an alternate shall be appointed by the current SGA President.

# Elections Packet 23-24

## **Enclosure:**

2023-2024 Elections Schedule, Officer Positions, Duties of Office, Candidate Application, Candidate Petition Form

## SPRING 2024 ELECTIONS SCHEDULE

March 4th– Applications open at 9 am.

March 10th: Applications Close at 8 pm.

March 11th: Applications will be reviewed by the Elections Committee and interview time slots will be emailed to all potential executive board members.

March 12-13th: Interviews will occur for all potential executive board members.

March 18th: Voting week begins at 9 am, campaigning begins, and the voting booth will occur at 12 pm outside of the Pride Cafeteria.

March 19th: Social media takeover for advertising the student body to vote. All campaigners will be posted on the official SGA Instagram account.

March 20th: Voting closes at 12 pm. Elections Committee and SGA Advisors will review the results.

March 22nd: The results will be sent out to the student body via email.

March 26<sup>th</sup>: March Town Hall, Induction of New Executive Board and Senators

April 30<sup>th</sup>: Newly elected executive team begins their roles and lead their first Town Hall.

## DUTIES OF OFFICE

All executive team positions must have cumulative GPA of a 2.75 or higher.

### 1. President

- a. Shall provide 6-8 hours of service per week, including 5 required office hours
- b. Shall be the official representative of the student body at official university functions
- c. Shall serve as the liaison between students, faculty, staff, administration, and the community
- d. Shall have the power to appoint all committee chairpersons listed in the standing committee system
- e. Shall have the power to submit a vote to break a tie regarding official business of the Council of Representatives, Senate, or Executive Team
- f. Shall preside over all Executive Team and Town Hall meetings
- g. Shall speak during the Academic Convocation Ceremony each year in August
- h. Shall be responsible for the general welfare of the SGA and will carry out other duties as needed
- i. Shall receive and manage all written or verbal complaints regarding member performance
- j. Shall appoint qualified students to open positions on the Executive Team and Senate
- k. Shall serve on the Student Affairs Committee of the Faculty Council
- l. Shall assist with the planning and logistics of all SGA sponsored programs and initiatives

### 2. Vice President of the Senate

- a. Shall provide 6-8 hours of service per week, including 5 required office hours
- b. Shall assume the duties and powers of the President in their absence or at the President's request
- c. Shall preside over the coordination and communication of all meetings of the Senate
- d. Shall oversee and manage the standing committee systems of the Senate ensuring that all committees and committee chairpersons are productive and following procedure

- e. Shall oversee the operation of the Student Experience Advisory Committee
- f. Shall oversee and administer all training programs for Senators and Committee Chairs
- g. Shall oversee the attendance and accountability program for all members of the Senate
- h. Shall oversee the process to review and revise all SGA governance documents and policies
- i. Shall serve on the Student Affairs Committee of the Faculty Council in the absence of the President
- j. Shall assist with the planning and logistics of all SGA sponsored programs and initiatives
- k. Shall perform other duties that are assigned by the President

### 3. Vice President of Finance

- a. Shall provide 6-8 hours of service per week, including 5 required office hours
- b. Shall serve as the Chief Financial Officer of the Student Government Association and oversee all financial processes of the Student Government Association
- c. Shall propose and oversee the annual SGA budget, including tracking expenditures, preparing budget recommendations, and making recommendations for improved cost effectiveness
- d. Shall approve and process all organization budget transactions with Advisor approval
- e. Shall oversee and coordinate the budget allocation process for all recognized student clubs and organizations including all Club Sports and Special Organizations
- f. Shall present an itemized budget report to the Senate once per month
- g. Shall oversee the coordination and execution of all fundraising activities
- h. Shall assist with the planning and logistics of all SGA sponsored programs and initiatives
- i. Shall perform other duties that are assigned by the President

### 4. Vice President of Public Relations and Special Events

- a. Shall provide 6-8 hours of service per week, including 5 required office hours

- b. Shall be responsible for promoting an overall positive media presence on the Student Government Association website, social media accounts, and in the University community
- c. Shall oversee all operations regarding the Student Government Association website and continuously implement new ideas to further enhance website functionality
- d. Shall be responsible for planning and executing major events hosted by the Student Government Association including Homecoming, SGA Week, and other major programs
- e. Shall be responsible for managing the Student Government Association Brand and developing an annual marketing plan to promote the SGA
- f. Shall be responsible for direct oversight of the Director of Communication
- g. Shall be responsible for establishing a working relationship with the University Relations Department and serving as the media contact for the SGA
- j. Shall resume all responsibilities of the Communications Director in the event of a vacancy
- k. Shall assist with the planning and logistics of all SGA sponsored programs and initiatives
- l. Shall perform other duties that are assigned by the President

#### 5. Director of Communications

- a. Shall provide 6-8 hours of service per week, including 5 required office hours
- b. Shall be responsible for direct oversight of the social media accounts in cooperation with the Vice President of Public Relations and Special Events
- c. Shall be responsible for coordinating and creating all advertisements, publicity, and press releases for Student Government Association functions
- d. Shall oversee the operation of the Publications and Marketing Committee
- e. Shall assist the Vice President of Public Relations and Events in the planning and execution of all major programs hosted by the Student Government Association
- f. Shall oversee and coordinate the Student Organization of the Month Recognition Program

- g. Shall assist with the planning and logistics of all SGA sponsored programs and initiatives
  - h. Shall perform other duties that are assigned by the President
6. Recording Secretary
- a. Shall provide 6-8 hours of service per week, including 5 required office hours
  - b. Shall be responsible for keeping accurate records of Executive Team, Senate Meetings, and Town Hall Meetings and conducting official correspondence of the SGA and the Executive Team
  - c. Shall be responsible for distributing, storing, and posting the official records of all meetings
  - d. Shall be responsible for monitoring and responding from the main SGA email account
  - e. Shall create all power points for SGA related events.
  - f. Shall oversee the room reservation process for all SGA sponsored meetings
  - g. Oversees the First Year Committee
  - h. Shall assist with the planning and logistics of all SGA sponsored programs and initiatives
  - i. Shall perform other duties that are assigned by the President

### ***Section B: Senators***

1. Shall be a representative voice for the undergraduate student population at Widener University
2. Shall attend all mandatory SGA sponsored events including, but not limited to: Senate Meetings, Town Hall Meetings, training sessions, major programs, community service projects, and retreats
3. Shall serve on at least one standing committee under the direction of the SGA
4. Shall have the power to vote on any issue presented in the SGA senate
5. Shall perform other duties as assigned by the Senate and Executive Team
6. Shall maintain at least two (2) hours a week in the SGA office to perform duties that are to be completed by their respective committee
7. Shall have an in depth understanding of the SGA Constitution and By-laws
8. Shall serve as a liaison between SGA, the student body, and administration
9. Shall abide by including, but not limited to the SGA Policies